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ABSTRACT

A major purpose of the research reported here is to determine whether or not children of minority backgrounds possess the ability to tell stories and verbalize in narrative form at age 3 and 4. Narratives and speech play were collected over a 9-month period in two Headstart classes in Honolulu (Hawaii). The children, most of mixed backgrounds, ranged in age from 2 years 11 months to 4 years 8 months. Data were collected by video and audio taping of context and speech in classroom settings during free-play time, on the playground, and at home. The data analysis focused on four issues: (1) the extent to which the children could construct narratives and how they did so, (2) effective ways to elicit narratives, (3) facilitation of narration by verbal interaction among the children, and (4) inference of the social rules underlying narrative performance in groups of children from this social background. Findings indicate that the first of these issues is of prime importance; some, but not all of the children were capable of telling stories. In addition to this, it seems that verbal interaction among children rather than an explicit request from an adult is an effective elicitation influence. These findings are discussed and implications are drawn for the developing and testing of narrative competence. (AMH)

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FINAL REPORT

NIE GRANT NO. G-80-0087
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Discourse Analysis of Classroom Narrative and Speech Play of Island Children

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Assistance of this research was provided by Lesley A. K. Bruce, who collected, indexed, and supervised the transcribing of the data, Edwin T. Yonamine who did all of the video and took all the black and white photographs, Vicelene M. Aladen who very competently typed most of the transcriptions' initial draft, and Germaine M. Ogasawara coded the transcripts for the analysis presented here.

Full cooperation and support were provided by Dr. Arthur King, Dr. Richard Hinze, and Hannah Lou Bennett.

1. INTRODUCTION

Until recently studies concentrating on the learning of reading and writing have neglected to take into account the different literacies and "multi non-literacies" of minority populations (Scollon and Scollon 1979:18). According to these authors minority people have difficulty becoming literate when participating in the dominant culture's educational institutions because of these cultural differences. Nor have compensatory programs been based upon an understanding of cultural differences in early preparatory experience. Thus, American public schools introduce the learning of literacy by presenting narrative material, assuming that the children are familiar with this literary form. School-aged children are assumed to know how to answer questions, discuss their experiences and recount events. In brief, they are assumed to be able to tell stories and verbalize in narrative form. One major purpose of this research was to determine whether or not children of minority background possessed such skills at age three-four, before entering kindergarten.

Scollon and Scollon have suggested that the "focus" of communication is crucial to becoming literate. They define "focused situation" as "any communicative situation in which there are strong limitations on negotiation between participants" (1979:20). Typical classroom lectures and structured question and answer recitations both exemplify "focused situations". In non-focused situations, by contrast, sense making is mutually accomplished, namely, it depends upon the adjustment of one party to the understanding of the other. Non-focused situations are strongly preferred by the Athabaskan Indians of Canada and Alaska because of the value that they place upon respecting individual human differences and their reluctance to force specific responses from others. Comparable unfocused styles appear among Hawaiian Americans and other Polynesians and thus may contribute to the difficulties that such groups have in becoming literate (Howard 1970, 1974, Boggs 1972, Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977).

The work of Boggs and Watson-Gegeo, has identified interaction styles and numerous communicative routines used by part-Hawaiian school-age children. We need to know more about such minority oral traditions and their relationship to methods of reading instruction in order to take advantage of them in designing literacy programs. Recently the work of Au (1980), Au and Jordan (1981), and Boggs (in press) has provided an example of a program which synthesizes certain features of Hawaiian interactional style with classroom instruction in literacy. The present study was also designed to determine whether earlier findings with regard to this style applied to children younger than those heretofore studied.

The overall goal of this research then was to study the language use of minority pre-school children in Hawai'i, focusing on narrative style, speech play and social interaction by recording and transcribing the verbal behavior of three and four year olds. Toward this goal narratives and speech play were collected over a nine month period in two Headstart classes at the University of Hawai'i Laboratory School in Metropolitan Honolulu, Hawai'i. By "narrative style" is meant "the recurring patterns in narrative, together with their component parts" (Watson 1972:1). Labov and Waletzky have identified the component parts of personal experience narratives as abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda (Labov and Waletzky 1967; Watson 1972:36). Labov and Waletzky's definition of "minimal narrative" has been used in the present study (see Analysis section below).

There is little question that part-Hawaiian five to seven year old children exhibit an imaginative and creative flair for telling narratives under appropriate circumstances (Boggs 1972, 1974, 1979; Boggs and Watson-Gegeo 1978; Watson 1972, 1973, 1975; Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). Noting the complexity, structure, and length of the 102 stories collected by Watson (1972), Boggs suggests that "children possess narrative skills many years before they have a natural opportunity to demonstrate them" (1979: ch. 7). He reports that children appeared not to practice narration at home before the age of five (1974:2,5). When children of this age were by themselves, no narratives were told. In the company of adults, only three narratives were told by children five years old or younger, but the adults did not participate in telling any of the narratives. Boggs concludes that children younger than about ten years of age do not tell stories under normal circumstances to adults or to other part-Hawaiian children (1979: ch. 7). However, he reports that when children six to ten years old were offered an opportunity to tell stories they eagerly responded to an adult, or in the presence of an adult. From this report, one might infer that a sympathetic audience is essential to eliciting narratives. Accordingly, that is the procedure that was systematically relied upon in the collection of data in this study, as detailed below.

Areas that we planned to look at included: how preschool minority island children tell stories; the nature of the situations in which they tell stories; the relationship between different speakers' utterances in discourse with other children and how verbal art forms are used both to assert dominance and establish and maintain relationships.

The chronic failure of public education in Hawai'i to teach reading effectively to Polynesians and part-Polynesians is well-known and documented annually by front-page newspaper accounts of low performance on standardized tests. While this has begun to change, Tharp and Gallimore have noted that "...the ethnic Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian child suffers an especially serious problem in learning to read" and by the end of the third grade, the problem is "so serious that general school alienation begins from the fourth grade on" (1974:23-2). Not only is learning a problem, but teaching breaks down; the resulting chaos is well documented (MacDonald and Gallimore 1971). Summarizing this problem, Tharp and Gallimore wrote "it is generally stated by educators that it is, in general, extraordinarily difficult to teach Hawaiian children to read" (1974:23-2; Tharp 1978:82-1). As mentioned earlier (Au 1980, Au and Jordan 1981) successful efforts are now underway to solve this problem at elementary grades, conducted by the Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP). The present study was intended to provide data on the development of those culturally based interactional styles on which these successful efforts are based.

2. DESCRIPTION OF STUDY POPULATION

The Headstart classes at the University of Hawai'i Laboratory School enroll part-Hawaiian and other minority pre-school island children. Forty children are divided into two groups of twenty. Their ages range from two years nine months to four years nine months. The children are predominantly part-Hawaiian and most are from families who are below the poverty level. All come from metropolitan Honolulu and live within a three mile radius of the school. Most of the children are of mixed backgrounds and include a range of one to nine ethnic combinations per child.

It is notable that with thirty-two ethnic groups represented, more than half of the children are Part-Hawaiian. (For a complete list of ethnic backgrounds represented, see Appendix Table 1.)

In September the children of both classes ranged in age from two years eleven months to four years eight months. The distribution of the children's age is summarized in the following table:

TABLE 1.

Age Range of Population: September 1980

Age Sept. 1980 yr./mo.	Number of children
4.8	3
4.7	1
4.6	4
4.5	2
4.4	1
4.3	2
4.2	3
4.1	4
4.0	1
3.11	4
3.10	1
3.9	3
3.8	0
3.7	2
3.6	1
3.5	1
3.4	2
3.3	0
3.2	0
3.1	0
3.0	3
2.11	2
Total children:	40

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data Collection Personnel

In the classrooms there were two teachers (Educational Associates), Ms. Betty Castillo and Ms. Antonina Farm, two assistants (Educational Assistants), Sylvia Yamada and Gladys Brent, supported by four to eight volunteer parent aids. This latter group consists of mothers, fathers, aunts, grandmothers and other relatives. There are also, on any given day, older siblings, cousins and up to six or eight younger siblings present. Names and principal duties of the grant staff are stated in the acknowledgments. Ms. Bruce, research assistant, is a second generation Caucasian in Hawai'i. She has master's degrees in Early Childhood

Education from Columbia University Teachers College, and Anthropology from the University of Hawai'i. She has distinction diplomas from the American Montessori Society and has had six years experience as a Montessori classroom teacher. She spoke Standard English at home and school while using "pidgin" as a peer group playground language at school and at work.

Mr. Yonamine, photographic research assistant, was born in Honolulu and is a second generation Japanese. At present he is a candidate for a Master of Education degree at the University of Hawai'i. His speech varies between Standard English and "pidgin".

Viclene Aladen, research assistant, is of Hawaiian, Chinese, Ilocano ethnicity and speaks Standard English, "pidgin", some Spanish, and understands some Ilocano. She has taught six years in elementary schools and is currently teaching English to speakers of other languages.

The Role of the Researchers

Data were collected by video and audio taping of context and speech in actual classroom settings during "free-play" time, in the playground at school and at home. The narratives were invited by use of an eliciting frame, "Tell us a story", in a context of social exchange in which the researchers did not test or instruct, but rather acted as accepting, friendly adults. The investigators were introduced to the children as university students who were interested in children's stories. We presented ourselves in an open, non-didactic, non-judgmental manner and attempted to avoid authoritarian roles.

While there were indications that the children expected a more directive role from the researchers and on a number of occasions expected us to resolve on-going disputes, a neutral non-interferring role was abandoned only when it appeared the children might injure each other. Such an occasion arose only once during a misunderstanding about what topic the speaker was addressing. Story tellers were self-selecting. While children were eating breakfast, groups of four at a table would be asked if they wanted to come to tell a story. A check list was kept to assure that every child was offered a turn. When the children were in the playground groups of children would be approached and asked if they would like to come with us inside to tell a story. If everyone declined, we joined in their activities and repeated the offer in a few minutes. On no day did no one consent to join us and after a few weeks the same children from each group tended to approach us asking to come and tell a story.

Video Recording

Video tapes were made with a portable video camera mounted on a tripod and from time to time with a hand-held camera. Attached to the

camera was a microphone on a 20 ft. extension cord. Most often the microphone was held by the child speaking. When this was placed in a microphone stand the children tended to remove it. At most times the children were aware of being videotaped because the equipment was visible and distinct from the classroom's permanent fixtures. The equipment was set up unconcealed in the first classroom either before the arrival of the children, during their breakfast, or during circle time. Sometimes children made faces at the camera or walked up and looked into its lens. At other times the children didn't seem to notice the equipment or ignored its function.

Still Photography

Twenty-two rolls (35mm, thirty-six black and white frames per roll) of film were exposed during the video taping to document gestures made by the children while being recorded on audio and video tapes. The resulting pictures were inserted into the transcriptions at the appropriate places. Sequences of our still photographs successfully convey a sense of on-going action, body gestures, facial expressions and document relative positions of story tellers, participants and audience within a scene. The still camera gave greater flexibility than the stationary video camera, freezing particular moments of the interaction.

Transcriptions

The video tapes were transcribed using a modification of Eleanor Ochs' transcription format conventions (1979) to accommodate more than two children. Minimal non-verbal language information has been put in. The audio tapes were listened to on a Sony Secutive Transcriber BM-45A. The transcription of verbal interaction from the video tapes is a very painstaking and an extremely slow process. The problem of overlapping speech was not solved, although we tried to solve it by using three audio tape recorders in addition to the video tape recorder microphone. Passages or words which could not be understood despite combined efforts of a variety of people, are indicated in the transcriptions. About fifty hours of joint reviewing time was spent during which the researcher was joined by mothers, parents, children, siblings, teachers and assistants, to go over the typed transcriptions. Children who dictated stories individually received typed booklets of their stories to take home. The children decorated their booklets with illustrations and took them home to give to parents, grandparents, and friends. Copies were also placed in the class library.

Records

An inventory listing all video tapes labelled with tape number, date, number of minutes is included in the Appendix. Inventory sheets were made for each tape to provide a sequential tally of events and notable verbal behavior. Tape indexing numbers are included listing

where the transactions occurred on the tape to assist in locating specific speech events and narratives.

Home Taping Sessions

The collection of data was preceded by a period in which four children were videotaped in their home settings. The home visits were to familiarize the children and their parents with the project, the equipment to be used, the methods used in filming, and the personnel. More visits were contemplated, but abandoned when the data obtained proved to be minimal.

Consent

The following consent form was used:

CONSENT FORM

Stephen T. Boggs, Lesley A. Bruce and Edwin T. Yonamine have my permission from September 1980 to June 1981 to study the speech of my child(ren)

_____

using photographs, and audio and video recordings.

They have explained and answered my questions about the purposes and procedures of this project. I agree to

_____a half-hour taping session at home (child)
_____weekly half-hour classroom taping sessions (child)
_____occasional viewing/discussion sessions (parents, teachers, and children; or just adults)

with the understanding that I am free to withdraw this permission and discontinue participation in this project from the time of my withdrawal.

I understand that the information collected is not intended for commercial use and may be used for instructional purposes, research, and publication to further educational and scholarly studies of children's speech.

_____

Signature Relation to child Date

_____

Interviewer Date

_____

Project Coordinator Date

---

4. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The purposes of the analysis were to determine the relative importance of the child's individual competence and of the eliciting conditions as determinants of the occurrence of a narrative performance by one or more children and the general role of particular verbal routines, such as name, sound, and word play, in the construction of, and interference with, narrative performances by the children studied. Key questions to be addressed included: how many children were capable of telling a minimal narrative; whether they were more likely to do so when asked by the researcher, or when influenced by interaction in the group; and whether two or more children could jointly construct a narrative performance. Children from five to seven years of age from similar background were known to be able to accomplish this (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977, Au 1980).

In order to accomplish these purposes all of the video tapes collected in classroom settings were reviewed and coded by a second research assistant, Ms. Germaine M. Ogasawara. She is a native of Hawaii, master's candidate in education, and a speaker of "pidgin" and Standard English. She had received more than two semesters of training by the Principal Investigator, and additional practice, in behavioral observation of children's interaction and the analysis of children's verbal routines. Spot checking of her protocol classifications by the PI resulted in complete concurrence. Only the classroom tapes were used in order to standardize the circumstances and participants while maximizing the number of children included. For similar reasons only sessions in which the grant research staff and children were present were used.

Coding instructions were to view all tapes with the completed transcripts at hand and to identify the following events in sequence:

1. An elicitation, such as, "Tell us a story" or equivalent, and the child to whom it was addressed, if any.

2. The response of the child addressed, and any other children, over the next two minutes, or until a definite break in the interaction, or attention of the children, occurred. Each response was to be classified as one of the types of responses listed below.

3. The occurrence of a minimal narrative, or longer narrative, and all responses preceding it for a period of two minutes, again, in sequence.

Particular attention was to be given in this coding to any response that related by form or direction of attention to a previous speaker, and this was indicated on the protocol.

The types of responses coded, in addition to elicitation, were:

1. Minimal narrative: two clauses referring to events in the past that were temporally related. A simple title would not qualify. "There was a dog in the cage. And he got out." would qualify.

2. Report: one or more clauses, not referring to temporally related events. For example, "We saw a dog. He was in a cage."

3. Verbal play: name play, sound or work play, jingles. Examples are given in the Findings section.

4. Singing.

5. Contradiction. (see Boggs 1978)

6. Statement. Any interpretable verbal utterance not classified above. Included were directives, claims, conversation, accusation, insult.

7. Utterance: any verbalization not interpretable.

Passages on 24 tapes met the above criteria. All such passages have been included in the Findings section. Forty-two children were identified in these sessions, which is two more than the number on whom background information were reported above.

The variables included on the final analysis were defined as follows:

1. Elicitation vs volunteered.

   0 - volunteered narrative: no immediate elicitation by LAKB (Lesley A. K. Bruce). Includes volunteering to narrate without performing, and elicitation by another child.

   2 - elicitation immediately preceding a narrative or other response by child addressed.

2. Group process. Includes any of the following: interweaving routines by other than the narrator, joking/teasing, conversation, name play, other forms of verbal play, imitating, offering turns to other, joint singing of same song.

0 - no interaction among other children at any time.

1 - interaction among any children in the session prior to narration or elicitation by LAKB.

2 - interaction among any children after the first line of a narrative, or other response of child addressed.

3 - interaction among children following narrative only.

3. Narrator's reaction to group process.

0 - ignores it to narrate, or there is no group process during narration.

1 - responds during narration. Includes interweaving of routines by narrator, as long as story continues.

2 - interrupts and does not finish narrative.

3 - initiates response by other children at end of narrative.

4. Joint performance.

0 - none.

1 - two or more children collectively tell one story: this is called "co-narration."

2 - two or more children narrate in single session without being elicited by LAKB. To be scored from point that second volunteered narrative occurs.

5. Narrative.

0 - does not begin a narrative, or refuses when elicited.

1 - narrates a single story in session. Includes several pieces of one story, or being interrupted.

2 - narrates more than one story in session, or repeats same story.

6. Competence.

   0 - never narrates on tapes included.

   1 - narrates on a later tape.

   2 - narrates first time, or has narrated on an earlier tape; i.e., a child who eventually narrated would be scored 1 each time elicited until she narrated; after s/he would be scored 2.

7. LAKB's role.

   0 - elicits only or does not elicit (volunteered narratives).

   2 - converses, answers questions, narrates, plays verbal games during session.

8. Child engages LAKB in conversation, asks series of questions, requests that she tell a story, or makes side comments to her during narration.

9. Name of child. To be entered each time elicited or narrating.

10. Session and location on tape. A session consists of contiguous events with a core of the same participants without a major break in the kind of interaction occurring or focus of attention.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To review: the present study was concerned with four matters. The first was the extent to which local minority children three to four years of age attending a pre-school could construct narratives and how they did so. This was the developmental question. The second was the hypothesis that repeated use of the eliciting phrase, "Tell us a story," or something similar, was an effective way to elicit narratives. The third was the hypothesis that verbal interaction among a group of children would facilitate narration, either by a single child, or by several children together--so-called co-narration. The fourth goal was to infer the social rules which might underlie narrative performance in groups of children from this cultural background.

Several kinds of evidence presented below indicate that the developmental issue is of prime importance among children this age, as might be expected. Briefly, some, but not all, of the children are capable of telling stories, both original and overheard tales, but many of them are just barely able to do so. This finding contrasts

with findings from children of similar background who are just a few years older than those in the present study. On the second matter, use of the eliciting phrase turns out not to be an effective way of eliciting narratives immediately among children of this age, and may even be counter-productive with those whose narrative skills are minimal. Other influences seem to be more effective. Chief among these is verbal interaction among children in a group. Finally, in order to infer social rules for narration a detailed analysis needs to be made of the sequencing of specific utterances by and between individual children. Inspection reveals, however, some of the principal verbal routines involved. These and their use will be illustrated.

The findings are presented and discussed in the order stated above, except that the developmental issue will be discussed throughout, as well as at the end. Implications of these findings are presented in the final section of this report.

Individual Competence

A total of 80 narratives or reports (overwhelmingly the former) were recorded on the 24 tapes analyzed. All of these, however, were told by just 21 of the 42 children. The frequency distribution is given in Table 2. One child told a total of 9 stories, another 7. It should be noted, furthermore, that the most frequent storytellers were among those who narrated earliest in the project period,

Table 2.

Number of Stories Told by Individuals	Number of Children
6 or more	4
5	3
3 - 4	8
1 - 2	6
0	21
Total	42

which lasted 9 months, and typically they narrated at the first opportunity. At the other end of the continuum were 21 children who never narrated, despite frequent participation in groups where other children were narrating and being frequently invited to tell a story. In a few cases they even expressed a desire to do so, but were unable to proceed. Other children perceived such incompetence in several cases. In one instance a boy who had been shown by another child

how to tell a story, never did so when invited. Several sessions later he asked for a turn, whereupon a peer said, "Watch, he goin' say 'Momma'." Indeed, "Hi, Momma" was all that he said. Other children indicated their inability by their surprised looks when asked to tell a story, or by saying, "I don't know how."

Even those who narrated, however, were pushing the limits of their competence, it would seem. In one early session, for example, the following passage appeared in the midst of an attempt by two children to construct a story together:

Example 1

(Leland, boy, and Teresa, girl)

(after several exchanges)
T: The elephant make dudu in da circu'
L: Du da alaphan. I go da circus, circus, circus. (moving hand in
(And circles)
T: (And,
I ea' da Da lady wen up i' d'
L: Ga go i ga bung um. Ka ku ka ku. Hea da bunny.
(exchange continues)
Note: ' indicates sound deleted from word.
(indicates words spoken simultaneously by different speakers.

While the nonsense syllables above resemble instances of sound play, they were not responded to as such on this occasion, despite the usual readiness of the children to engage in any form of verbal play as soon as it is offered. Consequently, I do not believe that this was an instance of verbal play. Rather, it appears to me to be glossalalia, which the speaker may have resorted to in an attempt to continue a story in the face of competition.

Other evidence of the role of individual competence is presented in the following sections.

Direct Immediate Elicitation

Among children who told at least one narrative on the tapes studied, only 22 per cent told one immediately upon elicitation, or after a brief exchange (not more than two statements) with LAKB. Even if one discounts instances in which repeated elicitations were made within a few minutes' period, the rate of success for immediate elicitation is well under 33 per cent. (It is difficult to determine whether some of the narratives coded as volunteered some time after elicitation during the same session were not in fact delayed responses to elicitation. For this reason we have drawn conclusions only about immediate response to elicitation.)

Children who ever narrated were more likely to volunteer stories than to produce them immediately in response to elicitation. Table 3 reports the ratio of narratives to total responses of all kinds (including non-responses) under each of four circumstances. As indicated, a child was more likely to tell a story when volunteering than when responding to elicitation, whether or not there was any interaction in the group before, during, or after the response in question.

Table 3. Narratives as a Per Cent of Total Responses.

	Group Process	Solo Performance
Elicited	24	20
Volunteered	82	80

This result is partly a matter of confidence. No doubt the child who feels confident enough to volunteer to tell a story is more likely to tell a story than one who has not volunteered. This thought calls attention to the many other factors involved when a child does not narrate when invited to do so. Other factors include wanting to tell a story at a particular time, and having something to say. Thus, it was frequently the case that a child who told one or more narratives in a session would refuse to narrate in response to elicitation, either before or after telling a story. Whatever the factors involved, it is a fact that calling upon a child to tell a story is not a particularly effective way to produce one immediately. When one further considers its likely effect upon a child whose narrative competence is limited, it can be inferred that direct elicitation may even be counterproductive.

Nevertheless, as the following section suggests, the use of such an eliciting phrase with a group of children over a period of time may stimulate group processes which have a noticeable effect upon story-telling.

Group Processes

There was a distinct correlation between volunteering a narrative and the occurrence of a group process. As shown in Table 4, narratives were more likely to be volunteered than elicited when a group process occurred in the same session with the narrative in question. "Solo" performances, so-called, were those in which there was no evidence

Table 4. Number of Narratives

	Told in Group Process	Solo Performance	
Elicited	21	16	
Volunteered	35	8	
Totals	56	24	80

of any audience response or verbal interaction among children in the same session as the narrative. Particular attention was given to this phenomenon in the coding. Solo performances, as the Table shows, were more likely to be in response to an elicitation than to be volunteered ones.

How is this correlation to be explained? A number of factors are undoubtedly involved. One is the provision of a model for narration in the session. Narratives tended to occur more often in sessions where more than one story was told (see Table 5). The largest number of stories told in any one session was 13. This result was not because

Table 5. Number of Stories and Story-Tellers Per Session.

Number of Stories Per Session	Number of Sessions	Total Number Told	Average Number of Speakers Per Session
1	26	26	1.0
2	9	18	1.4
3 or more	8	36	2.1
	Total	80	

one child monopolized the story-telling, although that did happen also. But more often several stories meant several different speakers. In three sessions, for instance, including the one just mentioned, there were three narrators. Thus there is evidence to suggest that telling a story in a group served to stimulate other children to tell stories also. That in itself was not coded as interaction or group process, however. What kind of interaction, as coded, could make another child want to tell a story?

As illustrated below, the most common kind of interaction in these groups by far was verbal play, much of it scatalogical. (In a paper

read at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, 1982, Ochs reported that a Samoan child's first word is expected to be "shit.") Much less common, but still frequent, were contradicting ("Not !" "Yes !") disputing over turns, and conversation. -It is hypothesized that participation in any of these kinds of verbal interaction would enable children to relate to one another in ways that they are already familiar with. Having done so they might be drawn into narrating as another child, perhaps an antagonist, had done; or to avoid being shown up. We know that this occurs in groups of older children, five to seven years of age, from similar background (Boggs and Watson-Gegeo 1978). It is reasonable to suppose that the same thing has happened here. Only further content analysis can confirm the hypothesis, however. Children sometimes initiated interaction themselves after telling a story, as if they felt uncomfortable without any audience response or other interaction. Similar behavior by eight to nine year olds has been reported (op cit).

On other occasions interaction was initiated by members of the audience during a story, as in this example.

Example 2.

(Kama, girl, and Julie, girl)

LAKB: (to K) Tell a story.
K: Yeah. Ka ka-ka do. Mommy walking. In na star. And he
(saw
J: (My mommy
K: my sister pick a all the way.
J: My mommy jah' 'tary. (=My mommy junk story)
K: Not, not, not, not,
(no-o-o-o-t
J: (Yes
My mommy
K: My mommy said (continues story)

Note: ' indicates sound deleted from word.
(indicates words spoken simultaneously by different speakers.
"jah' 'tary" was transcribed as "'ja daddy" and heard as "junk story" by another native speaker. Phonetically "jah'" is nasalized with the tongue against the roof of the mouth. The "s" in story deleted (a common practice). The "a" in "'tary" is broad, and the "r" is an alveolar flap. Whatever the interpretation, K contradicts the speaker, J.

As this example indicates, verbal interaction by listeners could distract a story-teller, and this could happen in many ways. In fact, stories were occasionally interrupted and not finished because of such distraction. Thus, the greater number of narratives volunteered in group interactive sessions (see Table 4) occurs in spite of a tendency for such interaction to disrupt, as well as to motivate,

story-telling. A more frequent occurrence was story-telling giving way to disputing over turns or to verbal play. This happened particularly when one child had monopolized story-telling in the session. It was as if the other children, denied the opportunity to tell stories, chose to retaliate with other routines. One recalls here the value behind "non-focussed" interaction discussed in the Introduction. On the other hand, children may simply have found verbal play, with its rich opportunities for creativity and relating to others, more interesting than the content of the stories told. These were, according to Bruce, imaginative stories, personal experiences, European folk tales, and imaginative stories based on TV or movies.

Verbal Routines

As mentioned earlier, certain verbal routines tended to monopolize long periods of time within the groups, during which no child volunteered to narrate or responded to invitations to narrate. Often these periods would last for more than 5 minutes. The following are brief examples of these routines.

Example 3. Name Play

(Lani, girl)

LAKB: Charnetta? (to Viclene) You know how to spell her name?
I don't know how to spell her name. Charnetta.
L: Hae hae shnaeta. Hae hae shnaeta. (sing-song)
Note: "ae" as in 'bat'

Example 4. Sound Play

(Daisy, girl, and Alicia, girl)

(the girls are disputing possession of the microphone, and hence turn)
A: You like fight?
D: (begins to sing, does not relinquish mic) Ay ! I neva have a chance. (=turn)
A: Well you pa ta fu chi cha pa (laughing). A Kepo help ! Mammy Mammy !
D: A ko lele a i o ko lele. (pun on "hanakokolele"= "shame, shame on you") (A grabs mic)
A: Ai my turn.
(everyone laughing)
A: ja ja jee jee ja. (throws mic on table)
D: O mata.
A: ja ja jee jee jo go.

Example 5. Scatalogical Word Play

(Kala, boy, Stanford, boy, Lonnie, boy)

S: Hey you dudu. (=shit)
K: Hey buk butt. (bukbuk=derogatory slang for Filipino)
L: You tut tut.
S: You fut fut. (fut=fart)
(continues some time)

More on Individual Competence

The rich possibilities for relating provided by the above routines, combined with limited narrative competence, make it seem somewhat remarkable that as many children told stories as in fact did so. Older children handle this situation, we know from other studies, by interweaving the above routines in such a way that two speakers jointly construct a narrative, so-called co-narration. Children in this study gave little evidence of such ability. There were only two instances of co-narration, and one was a poorly constructed narrative (Example 1). Some ability to counter interruption during narration is indicated by the fact that children did so in some fashion on 13 occasions. On the other hand they ignored interruptions, or terminated their stories in the face of interruption, on 18 occasions.

Additionally, other children did not respond to attempts to involve them in an ongoing story. For instance, in the following Example a boy uses name play directed at a competitor--a common tactic among older children (Boggs and Watson-Gegeo 1978). But the target does not respond.

Example 6.

(Leland, boy)

L: An once a time a lido lady come. Lido lady come da house. An den a piggy come out. An do'y (=doggy) come house. A piggy stay outsi' (=outside). And look the wado (=water). An once a time da lido Tresa (a girl listening) come. Lido Tresa come. (continues)

The frequency of co-narration in this data is considerably less than one would expect with five to seven year olds. Earlier it had been hypothesized that the latter learned to construct narratives by weaving together the kinds of verbal routines illustrated above (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). The present findings would suggest that this is not the case. Rather, some degree of individual narrative competence must have to precede the ability to co-narrate.

How do children react to the contradiction that they appear to be motivated by group interaction to tell stories, but the same group interaction also interferes with, and distracts them from narrating? As a hypothesis I suggest that the more confident, and perhaps more competent, narrate initially by ignoring group interaction; but that the group itself, by means of the verbal routines illustrated above, negotiates opportunities for various children to narrate and thus indirectly allocate turns while simultaneously motivating narration. This is consistent with the fact that several speakers tend to tell stories in the same session (Table 5) and that volunteered narratives tend to occur in sessions with group interaction (Table 4).

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF NARRATIVE COMPETENCE

Within the cultural background described for local part-Hawaiian children (Boggs 1979) it would appear that the best test for narrative competence would be to expose a child of three to seven years of age to a series of group sessions during which a peer, who had already demonstrated such competence, narrated. Naturally, or by some appropriate means not yet described, group interaction processes should be encouraged and allowed to develop spontaneously. One means for doing this, but not the only one, is to ask the group as a whole, and not one individual, if anyone has had a particular experience common to local children (or children anywhere) or knows a particular story where X happened (see Boggs 1979: ch. 10). Another means is for the adult to tell an appropriate story to the group without asking any questions. It is suggested that an accurate measure of narrative competence at a given age could be obtained by noting how many sessions elapse before the child volunteers to narrate a story. It was noted on a number of occasions in the present study that a child who had not participated in group interaction or narrated participated in group interaction for a period immediately before narrating for the first time.

Such a procedure contrasts with the procedure that is often, if not usually, followed in various tests of verbal competence: namely, direct elicitation in dyadic interaction with an adult. Previous research with part-Hawaiian children strongly indicates that such a procedure is culturally inappropriate, and invalid (Boggs 1972, 1979). The limited effectiveness of direct elicitation of individual children in the present study leaves little doubt about the applicability of this point to most children of local origin. Furthermore, the other studies indicate that the inhibition produced by direct elicitation in dyadic interaction is not age-related, since it applies to older children as well as the younger ones studied here.

A comparison of the present results with an analysis of the KEEP method of reading instruction (see Introduction and Boggs 1979: ch. 10) throws new light on reasons for the latter's effectiveness in eliciting

narratives. In both cases adult leadership of the interaction allows group processes to work, so that some natural way of allocating turns evolves. We have argued above that this occurs when narratives occur in clusters during a single group session. Narratives and reports also tend to occur in clusters during the KEEP reading sessions (loc. cit.). Likewise in both the present study and the KEEP lessons the group process seems to facilitate story-telling in various ways. A marked difference is noted, however, in the occurrence of verbal play and disputing, both of which are virtually absent in the KEEP sessions led by the teacher. While this is no doubt due to the inhibiting effect of the teacher's leadership and the school setting, and particularly the framing of the event as instruction, a further insight emerges from the present findings. It is that other children provide models of narration, which may make it possible for a child with untried narrative competence to narrate for the first time. Certainly such an hypothesis could be tested easily within the format of the KEEP curriculum without altering it in the slightest. At the same time use of the method suggested above for testing narrative competence could be evaluated against the many other measurements constantly being applied to that population of children. Some of these, such as the Grammatic Closure task on the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA), are developed to indicate features of fundamental linguistic significance developmentally for these children (Speidel 1981). It would be interesting and worthwhile to determine how they relate to narrative competence.

The KEEP reading lesson, as suggested, provides an opportunity for children to model narratives upon those of others in the same immediate context. Moreover, by controlling the topic to a degree the KEEP teacher also suggests content for stories and reports, something that was largely avoided in the present study (although not always). This focus likewise may make it easier for children to allocate turns by self-selecting. This in turn may reduce the need for the group to use verbal play or other routines for allocating turns.

In the one group of five to seven year old part-Hawaiian children analyzed earlier (Boggs and Watson-Gegeo 1978) it was shown that an explicitly stated norm emerged from the kinds of group process described here which called for story-telling as a way of getting even for insults of a sexual nature, instead of relying upon verbal play, joking/teasing, and contradicting routines. The result was a series of story-telling sessions which lasted for approximately one month before the group returned to these more familiar routines (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977, Boggs 1979: ch. 7). No such effect was observed in the present study. Nor were any stories on sexual themes told. These were the basis for the norm that developed in the older group. The reason may be a difference in development. Such a difference is not in the sexual content of utterances, which occurs in verbal play among the younger children as well as the older

ones. Rather, as noted in the Findings section, a child in the present study who used name play against a competitor during a story on several occasions failed to provoke a story in retaliation. This was exactly the mechanism that led to the emergence of the norm mentioned in the older group. It can be hypothesized that the younger children lacked the ability to retaliate by immediately constructing a story. Moreover, they may not even have perceived the thrust of the innuendo provided by the name play in the midst of group distractions. Indeed, attention to story-tellers was minimal in most sessions most of the time. Older children, by contrast, rarely let such a challenge pass, whether they appear to be attending or not.

A major finding of the present study is that approximately 50 per cent of the children three to four years, eight months, were apparently unable to tell any story (minimal narrative) under what appeared to be favorable and culturally appropriate circumstances and despite continued opportunity to do so. This compares with 0 per cent of a group of five to seven year old part-Hawaiian children recorded by Watson-Gegeo under comparable circumstances, (Watson-Gegeo and Boggs 1977). This fact, along with other evidence cited above, suggests the conclusion that individual narrative competence is still developing among local minority children between the ages of three and five years. While some minimal degree of individual competence apparently must be attained before a child can tell a story in a group of peers, the further development of this competence appears to develop in a group context, and to depend to some extent upon group processes that both motivate story-telling and allocate turns at story-telling. This finding has the further implication that for these children the development of narrative competence past a minimal point is not an egocentric process located within the individual child but a result of the group's ability to negotiate norms.

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APPENDIX

TABLE I

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ETHNIC GROUPS REPRESENTED

1. American Indian
2. Black
3. Brazilian
4. Chicano
5. Chinese
6. Danish
7. Dutch
8. English
9. Filipino
10. French
11. German
12. Guamanian
13. Guamanian (Chamorro)
14. Hawaiian
15. Hispanic (Spanish, Mexiban)
16. Irish
17. Japanese
18. Korean
19. Mexican
20. Norwegian
21. Okinawan
22. Palauan
23. Portugese
24. Puerto Rican
25. Samoan
26. Spanish
27. Swedish
28. Tahitian
29. Tongan
30. Vietnamese
31. Visayan
32. Welsh

APPENDIX

TABLE II

TAPE NUMBER First Quarter	DATE (August - October)	MINUTES	16 tapes
1	9/11/80	12	
2	9/11/80	20	
3	9/12/80	27	
4	9/14/80	32	
5	9/15/80	10	
6	9/16/80	25	
7	9/25/80	20	
8	9/30/80	25	
9	10/ 7/80	32	
10	10/14/80	32	
11	10/ 9/80	25	
12	10/14/80	32	
13	10/16/80	32	
14	10/16/80	24	
15	10/28/80	32	
16	10/28/80 (006-087)	24	
	11/13/80 (089-377)		
Second Quarter	(November - January		8 tapes
17	11/ 6/80	12	
18	11/ 6/80	10	
19	11/18/80	28	
20	11/18/80	27	
21	11/25/80	30	
22	12/ 2/80	33	
23	12/ 9/80	32	
24	12/16/80	31	
Third Quarter	(February - April		17 tapes
25	2/ 2/81	32	
26	2/ 2/81	10	
27	2/ 9/81	33	
28	2/ 9/81	28	
29	2/23/81	30	
30	2/23/81	29	
31.	3/ 2/81	33	
32	3/ 9/81	33	
33	3/ 9/81	30	
34	3/16/81	34	
35	3/30/81	33	

TABLE II
(Cont'd)

36	4/ 6/81	33
37	4/13/81	33
38	4/13/81	9
39	4/20/81	32
40	4/20/81 (003-200)	32
	4/27/81 (201-374)	
41	4/27/81	31
42	5/ 4/81	2
43	5/ 4/81	33
44	6/ 8/81	32